

# Tower Grove Heights Gazette

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Volume 22, No. 4

Winter 2011

## All Under One Roof - 100 Neediest Cases



BY ELLEN WILSON In many cultures around the world it is customary to live in a home with multiple generations living under the same roof. While it occurs here as well, it is often a signal of financial hardship. Adult children moving back home because they lost their job. Parents moving in with their children because of a health or financial issue.

Young parents unable to care for their children who need the emotional and financial support of their own parents. This year the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association has again selected families through the 100 Neediest Cases program to provide some relief for two multi-generational families.

Each family is in crisis and at the breaking point both financially and emotionally. The elders of Family 1 have such extreme health issues that their daughter has moved in to help while she cares for her own four boys. The apartment is not set up for young children and everyone is struggling to manage in the new situation. Family 2 also has three generations in one household. In this case both the grandmother and grandson have severe medical issues which take an enormous toll on the family. Just getting to the doctor appointments

and paying for prescribed medications is an enormous effort. The money is so tight that they often have to take the children to a food pantry just to ensure they get something to eat.

Both families are doing what they can to care for themselves and the young children in their care, but they could use some help. This is TGHNA's eighth year supporting south city families and I hope you will join me again in lending a hand to those reaching out for one. Our goal is to provide a holiday morning gift surprise for the children and help each family with bills and food to try to give them a moment of relief that they can enjoy with their family.

*continued on page 2*

## The Green Alley Project Phase I



BY MARILYN BROWNING As anyone who has passed by the 36-3700-block alley between Utah and Humphrey knows, construction on Phase I of the Green Alley project in our neighborhood has been beautifully completed. For what may have seemed an eternity to those that live on the block, trash-, recycling- and yard waste- dumpsters took up residence in the streets and access to the alley was limited while the work was being done. In reality, the construction work took from June 21st to September 15, and only one half of the alley was done at a time to minimize the inconvenience.

As you'll recall, Phase I of the Green Alley Project has been funded by a Community Development Block Grant through the Main Street Recovery Plan. This project is one of several efforts around Saint Louis to filter and absorb water runoff from our largely water-impermeable cityscape, efforts which also include such things as establishment of native plant rain gardens, tree plantings, and construction of dry swales. Together, these efforts help slow down and in some cases even eliminate the excess volume of sewer water created during rainstorms. It's these excess waters that overwhelm our sewer system and cause us to dump untreated polluted waters into our riverways.

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**ALL UNDER ONE ROOF... ~ CONTINUED**  
----- **PICK ONE (OR MORE) TO BUY FOR:**

There are several ways you can help. You can donate a new unwrapped gift that fits one of the family members, donate items or a gift certificate fitting one of the general needs, or donate cash (or check – made out to TGHNA) which will be used to buy gifts and pay for utilities. Drop your donations at the drop point and we take care of the rest. All gifts will be wrapped and distributed to the families. Choose one (or more) of the following:

**Family 1:**

Grandparents with severe disabilities; Daughter moved in with her children to help.



**Grandmother: (57)** Top (Med 9); Pants (11); Coat (10); Shoes (8.5)

**Grandfather: (54)** Top (XXXLG); Pants (52x36); Coat (XXXLG Tall); Shoes (11)

**Mother: (24)** Top (Med. 7); Pants (9); Coat (9); Shoes (8.5)

**Son: (6)** Top and Pants (8); Coat (10); Shoes (3); animals, cars; sports; books; Transformers

**Son: (5)** Top and Pants (6); Coat (7); Shoes (1.5); toy robots; "Go Diego Go"

**Son: (3)** Top and Pants (4); Coat (5); Shoes (12.5); toys with lights and noise; Sesame Street; "Cars"

**Son: (2)** Top and Pants (4); Coat (5); Shoes (12.5); toys with lights and noise; Sesame Street; "Cars"

**Special Requests:** winter clothes, coats and boots for all; diapers and Pull-ups; bath towels.

**Family 2:**

Multigenerational family with many medical issues.



**Grandmother: (46)** Top, pants & coat (5-6); Shoes (7.5)

**Mother: (24)** Top, pants & coat (5-6); Shoes (7)

**Son: (7)** Top, pants & coat (8-10); Shoes (1); Transformers; hand held games

**Daughter: (7)** Top, pants, and coat (2T); Shoes (3); doll and stroller (for doll)

**Special Requests:** winter clothes, coats, and boots; sheets/comforters (full and twin); gift certificate for medicines (Walgreens); monthly bus pass.

**Both families need the following:**

**Health Care Items** – Consider: personal hygiene products, home cleaning supplies; a gift certificate to Walgreens or Target...

**Holiday Food Items** – Consider: gift certificate to Schnucks; Shop N Save; Aldi....

**Educational Items** – Consider: age appropriate books; family games; school supplies...

**Cash** – for gifts or utility bills which are paid directly by 100 Neediest Cases (checks to TGHNA)

There is always a need for volunteers to help distribute flyers to the neighborhood and to wrap the gifts. If you are interested in helping to wrap or flyer, contact Ellen.

**DUE DATE FOR DONATIONS: DECEMBER 16th**

**Wrapping Party: December 17th at 10:00 a.m. at Ellen's house**

**Drop Point & Contact: Ellen Wilson, 3617 Juniata St., 314-771-1732**

# Green Alley Project Phase I - continued

For the Humphrey-Utah alley, old pavers were dug up, and as many salvaged as possible to create the entrances on either end of the alley, helping maintain the alley's historic appearance. A layer of soil underneath the old pavers was removed, and replaced with a pervious aggregate which can absorb and filter water. Pervious pavers were laid on top in a running bond pattern, and the spaces between filled in with more aggregate. In all, 2 feet of aggregate were laid down to filter and store rainwater runoff. Sloping concrete strips eased the transitions from parking pads and garages to the pervious surfaces.

The following before and after pictures show the huge difference the work on the alleys made. The patchwork of old pavers and asphalt was replaced with a beautiful level surface that will reduce or even eliminate some of the storm water runoff that overloads our sewer system during periods of heavy rainfall. Some residents are regularly using their garages for the first time, since the huge ruts and potholes behind their homes had made backing in and out, much less driving the alley, a hazardous enterprise!



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

Says Utah resident Alba Blondis, "When I first saw the old alley after purchasing my house, I was very disheartened. This [new] alley is a 100% improvement in support of the value of the homes on the block. We celebrate our new alley!"

*continued on page 7*



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# Meet Your Neighbors

by Susie Newsham

Driving along Arsenal on Saturdays, near the intersection at Grand, you likely have noticed a sign outside of St. John's Episcopal Church that reads, "Free Meal For All 4-6." I've seen this sign several times and thought about how giving the church was to feed the hungry. But when I met the Rev. Teresa Danieley, pastor of St. John's and a Tower Grove Heights resident, she explained that while they of course welcome anyone that needs a meal, the "Peace Meal Project" is more about bringing the community together to share a meal. Anyone is invited to come and enjoy the company of the many great neighbors we have in Tower Grove Heights. Pastor Teresa is one of those great neighbors.

Teresa grew up in north St. Louis County and was raised in the Episcopal faith. She loved everything about the city and would frequently patronize many of the restaurants and coffee shops on south Grand, when it was just being developed. She remembers a time when she and a couple of her friends were having a coffee at MoKaBe's. At the time one of her friends who was raised at St. John's jokingly said, "Wouldn't it be funny if you were one day the pastor of St. John's?" They laughed it off and carried on with their day.

Teresa knew from a young age that she wanted to be a priest. To fulfill her dream, she went to Yale College where she received a bachelor's degree in history, completed her Master of Public Policy at University of Chicago and earned her Master of Divinity from

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General Theological Seminary. With plenty of education under her belt, she worked several years in New York and Chicago as a community organizer until one day in 2003 when she received a call from Bishop G. Wayne Smith, Episcopal Bishop of Missouri.

Bishop Smith asked her if she would research Tower Grove Heights to see if they should continue to keep St. John's at that location. At the time, St. John's congregation was only about 15 people. Teresa agreed and began looking into the neighborhood. Teresa was familiar with Tower Grove, but hadn't spent enough time to be able to give a good answer back to the Bishop. It didn't take her long though to make a decision. She reported back to the Bishop saying the neighborhood was perfect for the church, noting that it had the progressive and creative environment that was fitting for St. John's and its future parishioners. Just when she thought her job was done, she received another call from Bishop Smith asking her if she would consider serving as the 21st rector (pastor) of St. John's. The St. John's congregation agreed with the Bishop and she took the job. While Teresa knew that it wouldn't be easy trying to grow the congregation and spread the word about the progressive church, she was up for the challenge. And there was also the benefit of living in Tower Grove Heights.

Today, there are more than 200 diverse parishioners at St. John's and Teresa is proud to lead the church that is so heavily focused on the neighborhood. An estimated 1,200 people use the St. John's buildings every month for various events and meetings. The church is always active and offers many services including a Montessori Sunday School called "Godly Play," professional child care on Sundays, adult education and, of course, the Peace Meal Project. The church also hosts the St. Louis Community Farmers' Market on the second Saturday of each "winter" month from 9 am - 1 pm (November through April). For more information about St. John's or the winter Farmers' Market, visit [www.towergrovechurch.org](http://www.towergrovechurch.org).

Outside of her work at St. John's, Teresa and her husband, Jonathan, are currently hard at work rehabbing a home on the 3800 block of Wyoming. Teresa grew up with a father that always rehabbed homes, so starting a gut rehab with her husband didn't seem like as big of a task as most of us think. With the project expected to be completed in a matter of weeks, Teresa is looking forward to the end result. "It's going to be beautiful. Getting to that point has been challenging, but we know

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it's almost over. My husband is already planning to host Christmas parties." Until they move into the home, they are renting on Gustine.

Ten months ago, Teresa and Jonathan welcomed baby Lucy into their family. She and her family enjoy taking full advantage of the neighborhood. They like to go on bike rides, walk in the Park and the Garden, eat at local restaurants and take Lucy to all the different playgrounds. Teresa loves to garden, and when I asked her to tell me something many people may not know, she replied "I get my tattoos at Cheap Trx." Yet another way she supports our local community.

Teresa, like many Tower Grove Heights neighbors, is fully committed to the community and the city. She said, "I had a calling to come back to St. Louis and I want to make a difference."

# DCN DEVELOPMENT, LLC

by Mike Prejna

When's the last time you worked with (or even heard of) a contractor whose greatest pleasure comes not from cashing his client's check at the end of a project, but from standing back with that client to survey the results of the work, and seeing a look of complete satisfaction and admiration on the client's face? Turns out that very unique contractor lives and works right here in Tower Grove South. Dan Noecker, together with his wife, Carol, owns and operates DCN Development, LLC, a rehab/remodel/handyman business which is the featured advertiser in this edition of the "Tower Grove Heights Gazette."

Dan and Carol have made their home in various locations of Tower Grove South for more than 20 years. Since launching DCN in 2000, they've built the business on a simple premise: provide a good service for a fair price, and treat the customer well. It's a philosophy Dan learned at a young age from his older brother, John, who's also a contractor. He taught Dan the building trade and how to rehab older homes. "Respect the customer" was his first lesson," Dan explains. "I always want to be able to see a client in the grocery store and have a friendly conversation with him or her."

The Noecker brothers are originally from Nebraska, where their father was a hard-working, respected plumber. Dan followed his brother and father to St. Louis in the late 1970s to pursue property rehab and remodeling opportunities. At first, Dan's interest in music side-tracked him briefly from the family business, when he enrolled in Broadcast Center to become a DJ. Although that career path was short lived, it worked out in a far better way in that he met his future wife, Carol, at the school.

For years, Dan collaborated with his brother in the contracting business while Carol pursued a career in commercial real estate and property management. Eventually Dan and Carol decided it made more sense to combine their talents and work for themselves. Since making that leap, they've both gotten their hands dirty on projects of every size and scope around Tower Grove South, from retro fitting bathrooms to building two-story additions onto homes.

The Noeckers take pride in rehabbing rather than just restoring homes by adding their own modern touch to each project. "We put our signature on jobs by updating these great, old St. Louis homes to the way people live now," says Dan. "We're fully faithful to the old time look, but we add the modern conveniences that people want and need."

Similarly, the Noeckers have seen their clients' tastes become more discerning and respectful of the past over the years. "The attitudes of homeowners have really changed since I started—people care more," Dan explains. "In the 70s and 80s the work was more about piecing things back together. These days, people want details that are not only accurate, but well executed and functional for modern living as well. And the building materials have gotten better. Now I can go to a lumber yard for good reproduction pieces that I would've had to track down or make work before."

One testament to the quality of Dan and Carol's work is that clients

who hired them 20 years ago are coming back to them for remodels to their remodels. Another is that they've kept steadily busy on word-of-mouth recommendations, even during today's challenging housing market and economic climate.

As Carol explains, the sense of community that exists in Tower Grove South has allowed the Noeckers to build lasting relationships with clients who are neighbors and neighbors who are clients. "Before we moved to Portis (in 2007) we lived on the 3900 block of Connecticut for 10 years. With the exception of one or two neighbors, everyone knew each other and looked out for each other. We'd have block parties and alley sweeps and you'd always see people out walking with their kids or dogs. We've seen the area return to a true neighborhood feel, with a nice mix of younger families and long-time residents. People are seeking out the sense of community and amenities that the city offers."

"I fell in love with St. Louis when I moved here in the 70s," Dan adds. "To me, it's just a small town with a lot of people."

Clearly, with Dan and Carol Noecker lending their talents, integrity and sense of community welfare to the neighborhood, residents of Tower Grove South have not just a valuable professional resource but genuinely good folks to call upon.



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Phase II of the Green Alley Project, funded by a 319 grant from the EPA and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, is estimated to start in late May or early June of next year, and will include the alleys of the 3800 block of Humphrey-Utah and the 36-3800 blocks of McDonald-Utah. For all those who will enjoy the present and future alley improvements, there are a few things to keep in mind. Let's call them the do's and don'ts of a pervious alley system:

- Do:**
- Keep your green alley clean of dirt and debris so water can drain
  - Install plantings in your back yard to absorb and filter water before reaching the alley
  - Shovel or plow your alley as required. Salt can be used in moderation but avoid kitty litter or sand, which can reduce the ability of the pavers to absorb and filter water.

- Don't:**
- Dump chemicals or toxic materials on or near the green alley
  - Spread sand, dirt, or mulch on or near permeable paving in the green alley
  - Seal or pave over permeable pavers



A typical section of alley before



The same section after



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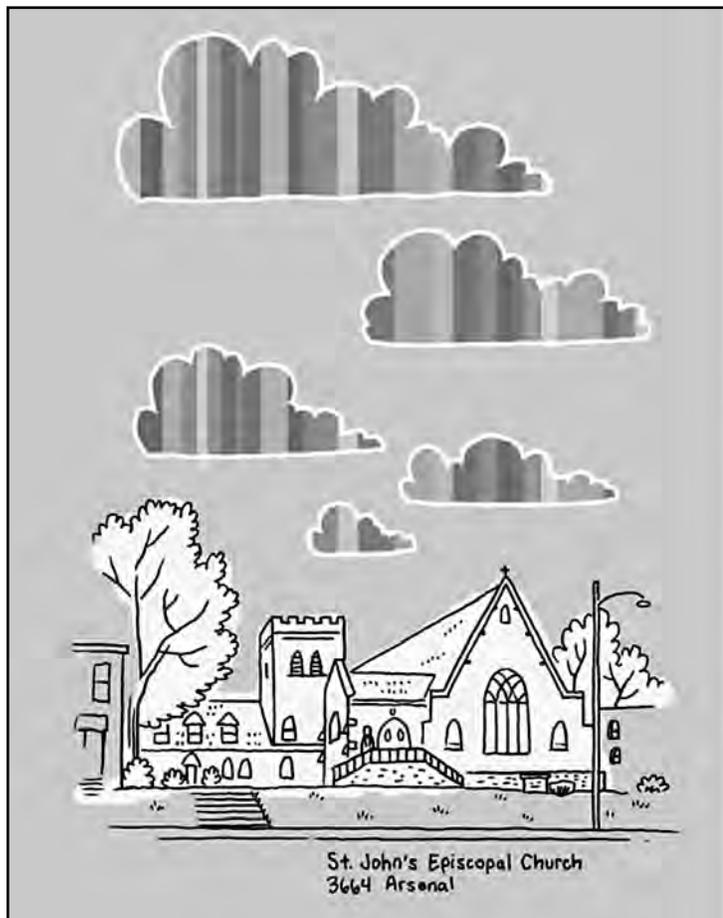
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# TGHNA Makes History!



BY RICH SEIFERT

Well George Washington never slept here in Tower Grove Heights and the Civil War wasn't fought within our borders, but we've had some interesting times. To preserve those memories for future generations, your Neighborhood Association has donated most of its archives to the Missouri History Museum. This will also eventually make these treasures more accessible to you.

Let's look back for a moment. You've probably heard some of the history of Tower Grove Heights, how the Connecticut Insurance and Realty Companies developed and sold home sites in the late 1800s. They finally auctioned off all unsold lots in June 1905.

In the summer of 1908 the Tower Grove Heights Improvement Association was formed. Its first president, James Rollins of 3702 Juniata, waxed eloquent about "Tower Grove Heights: The magic city, a city within a city" and so on. Yours truly doesn't know how long that organization functioned or what groups formed and disbanded the next eight decades. So we have an opportunity for someone who wants to do some historical research.

Jump ahead now to October 1987. Various folks here gathered to form the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association that you now know. Our first president Jean Iezzi stressed at that time "the importance of knowing your neighbors, working together to solve problems, and helping each other maintain and improve the neighborhood." Jean and her husband Rich remain active neighbors and members of TGHNA.

The first Tower Grove Heights Gazette, Volume 1 - Number 1, was dated August 30, 1988. Over the years it has chronicled many fascinating events, sites, and people in our neighborhood as well as looked back over our history. The one you are reading, Volume 22 - Number 4, is the 120th issue to be published.

When your current Secretary Claudia Seifert began her duties in January 2009, the Association's "archives" were delivered in a minivan, which was surprisingly full. Thirty years' of material had accumulated and it was not visibly organized. There was substantial duplication of papers and things and many items weren't even dated.

A librarian by training, Claudia saw this as a challenge. In the months that followed she sifted, sorted, and sanitized [some things didn't smell very good] the collection. So the archives were now neatly organized.

But the TGHNA Board feared that some future secretary might not have sufficient storage space and respect for the collection's value, so long term preservation was considered. It was eventually decided the Missouri History Museum was a natural destination and the museum said they would be glad to accept the donation. These materials fit well into their mission of preserving evidence of how the people actually lived in various times and portions of this region. Their collection already had items from some other City neighborhoods, such as St. Louis Hills.

In early June of this year, Marilyn Browning and Rich Seifert presented most of the archives to the Missouri History Museum's Library and Research Center, on Skinker. It's an extraordinary facility and is open to the public. Librarian Emily Jaycox happily accepted the collection, noting she was impressed with how organized things were. The most important asset, all agreed, was our complete set of Gazettes – a key historic record.

Note the term "most of the archives" above. TGHNA actually has a Document Retention Policy which specifies items or documents that each officer must keep in the files, at least for certain time periods. So not everything was transferred. Certain things must wait until either they age out or some duplication process can be arranged.

Now what happens? The Museum's Library and Research Center will first need a little time to study our donation and plan its integration into their overall collection. The Museum has a massive effort underway to digitize all of their col-

*continued on next page*



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# TGHNA Makes History!

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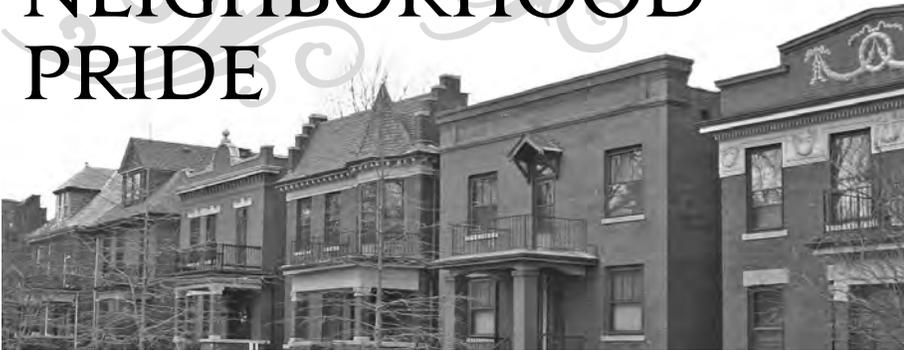
lection's printed material and make them available on-line. Your Board made clear to Emily what our priority preference would be: digitize the back issues of our Gazette, to provide home access to everyone.

If you'd like learn more of Tower Grove Heights history, check out our web site <http://towergroveheights.com/> and proceed to the Places tab. Under the Archives tab you will also find issues of the Gazette beginning in 2009. A year and a half of Meeting Minutes are also available there. If you really have time to kill, start exploring the History Museum Library's web site <http://www.mohistory.org/lrc-home/> You won't find our collection there just yet, but keep watching.

The Secretary's files are now considerably slimmer, reflecting both our archive donation and a librarian's sensibilities on unnecessary duplication. But one asset seemed just too fascinating for the recycle bin – there are dozens of old issues of the Gazette. Thus we announce **The Great Gazette Giveaway**. If you would like an old issue or two, or even a dozen or more, send an e-mail request to [secretary@towergroveheights.com](mailto:secretary@towergroveheights.com) with "Gazette Giveaway" as the Subject. If you don't have e-mail, just come to our next meeting or phone the author at home. Some of the old advertisements are as interesting as the articles, but please don't try to use expired coupons.



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# "DID YOU KNOW?"

A Quarterly Column on Real Estate  
by Debby Ervin

## DID YOU KNOW?...

These houses sold in Tower Grove Heights from August 8, 2011 through November 1, 2011.

Type	Address	Sold For	Days on Market	Original Price	% List to Sold
single	3875 Wyoming	\$102,000	43	\$103,000	98%
single	3865 Wyoming	\$142,000	137	\$125,000	114%
single	3842 Juniata	\$189,000	18	\$189,900	100%
single	3889 Hartford	\$227,500	10	\$229,900	99%
single	3800 Humphrey	\$278,130	10	\$295,000	94%
single	3807 Humphrey	\$330,000	14	\$344,900	96%
2-Family	3855 Juniata	\$88,000	350	\$92,900	95%
2-Family	3644 Arsenal	\$90,000	3	\$94,900	95%

## DID YOU KNOW?...

If you are selling your home and are willing to offer a Home Warranty to your buyer; that same warranty may cover new repairs on your home for no extra charge. All you would pay on qualifying repairs is the deductible on the warranty.

## DID YOU KNOW?...

If you purchase a foreclosure that is occupied by tenants, they must be given a 90 day notice before they must vacate the property.

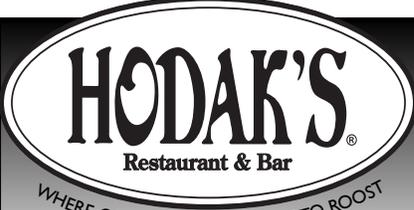
## DID YOU KNOW?...

A short sale means the sellers owe more than the house is worth or can be sold for on the open market. The lender(s) must agree to accept less than the balance of the loan. Some real estate agents will refuse to take the listing because a short sale takes longer to sell.

## DID YOU KNOW?...

One of the best ways to purchase a foreclosure is to pay cash and offer your agent a bonus. Commission normally paid on the purchase of a foreclosure to the agent is too low for a real estate agent to complete the transaction.

Your feedback is important to me and the future of this column. Send your comments to [deborahervin@att.net](mailto:deborahervin@att.net)



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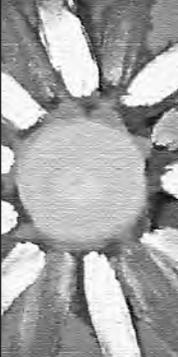
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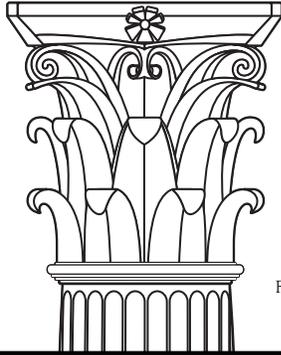
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# National Night Out

National Night Out is an event held the first Tuesday of August. The event has been held since 1984 and is meant to increase awareness about police programs in communities, such as drug prevention, Neighborhood Watch, and other anti-crime efforts.



For the first National Night Out ,400 communities in 23 states across the country participated. The event has since grown to involve 37.0 million people in 15,110 communities from all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canadian cities, and military bases worldwide. Initially communities held lights-on vigils. Now, many communities hold block parties, festivals, and other events to help bring neighbors together.

In Tower Grove Heights, Mimi Haag organized a National Night Out block party this year for the 36-3700 block of Hartford Street. And what a block party it was! Despite some record heat that day, 40 people showed up to get acquainted with one another, and to share in the great food and festivities.

The party unofficially started at 5:45 with a garden tour of four neighborhood houses, including one with bee hives. The street party started at 6:30 and ended at 9:00. Games included a

water balloon toss, where all participants, both kids and grownups, got extremely wet, and a race where the runners were required to carry cotton balls on plastic spoons stuck between their teeth.

"Amazing the stamina of some of these neighbors to keep running and running! We had several winners," Mimi said.

Prizes consisted of gift certificates to Local Harvest and Gelatos, bottles of wine, chocolate goodies, kids glow necklaces and water toys, and a variety of treats from Trader Joe's. Prizes were also given for such things as who has lived on the street the longest, who is the newest resident, who feeds the most cats, and who parks the most cars on the street.



The Trans, who own Mekong Restaurant on the corner of Hartford and South Grand, generously donated plenty of great food and beer, and Kim Tran acted as grill master, cooking up delicious chicken for the group.

Says Mimi "Even in the heat people came out to enjoy good food and good neighbors!"



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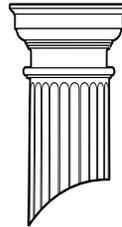
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- ✓ To find out what is happening in the neighborhood
- ✓ To make the Heights a cleaner and safer place
- ✓ To have a liaison with City Hall and other agencies
- ✓ To better protect our property values
- ✓ To make TGH a more interesting, fun place to live

Indicate your membership level choice: \_\_\_\_\_

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